

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 TEL AV 04428 171742Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 H-02 /017 W  
-----180401Z 117417 /12

R 171331Z JUN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6773

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 4428

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SCUL, IS  
SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY CONCERNING ALLEGED IDF DESTRUCTION  
OF BYZANTINE MONASTERY

REF: TEL AVIV 3900

1. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAS PROVIDED US WITH  
THE FOLLOWING EXPLANATION OF THE ALLEGED IDF DESTRUCTION  
OF A BYZANTINE ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE AT TABGA.

2. IN SEPTEMBER 1976, IN THE COURSE OF WIDENING A ROAD,  
AN ARMY BULLDOZER BY MISTAKE HIT PART OF AN ANCIENT WALL  
IN THE VICINITY OF SOME ARCHEOLOGICAL DIGGINGS AT TABGA.  
THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE MINISTRY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS  
SHORTLY AFTER THE INCIDENT EXPRESSED HIS REGRETS TO THE  
FRANCISCAN FATHERS UNDER WHOSE SPONSORSHIP THE DIG WAS  
TAKING PLACE. ON NOVEMBER 10, 1976 THROUGH A REQUEST  
FROM THE MINISTRY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, A MEETING BETWEEN  
ARMY OFFICERS AND THE FRANCISCANS WAS ARRANGED AND THE  
FATHERS ASKED FOR: A) A LETTER OF APOLOGY; B) THE RIGHTS  
TO RESTORE THE SITE; C) AS A GESTURE OF COMPENSATION,  
THAT THE ARMY INSTALL AT ITS EXPENSE A PARKING LOT  
FOR THE FRANCISCANS NEAR THE DIG. ON NOVEMBER 18,  
1976 A DEFENSE MINISTRY OFFICIAL SENT A LETTER TO  
THE FRANCISCANS ACCEPTING THEIR THREE PROPOSALS. AS  
OF FEBRUARY 1977, AT WHICH TIME THE FRANCISCANS AND  
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THE ARMY WERE COOPERATING IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THEIR AGREEMENT, THE IDF CLOSED ITS FILE IN THE MATTER.

3. MINISTRY OFFICIAL EXPRESSED HIS UNDERSTANDING FOR  
THE OUTRAGE FELT BY THE PRIEST RESPONSIBLE FOR THE  
ARCHEOLOGICAL DIG BUT SAID THAT THE PRIEST'S ACCOUNT  
OF WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED HAD BEEN HIGHLY EXAGGERATED.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ARCHEOLOGY, PLACES OF WORSHIP, BUILDING DAMAGE  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 17-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977TELAV04428  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Litigation History:**  
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**Office:** ACTION NEA  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Reference:** 77 TEL AVIV 3900  
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**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY CONCERNING ALLEGED IDF DESTRUCTION OF BYZANTINE MONASTERY  
**TAGS:** SCUL, IS  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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